

**DRAFT RESOLUTION FOR ADVISORY COUNCIL DISCUSSION  
AT JANUARY 23, 2015 MEETING**

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS) Advisory Council (AC) supports the Habitat Framework initiative of the Olympic Coast Intergovernmental Policy Council (IPC) and encourages the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) and NOAA to support this important collaborative effort, including providing funding as available and expertise from NOAA staff.

The Habitat Framework initiative is based on a need for a common understanding of all information sources regarding habitat and its role in supporting marine ecosystems. The Habitat Framework would serve as a comprehensive catalog to be used for supporting efforts to inform ecosystem-based management, identify and protect important habitats, enhance coastal and marine spatial planning, and other efforts to improve our understanding and protection of important marine resources.

The Habitat Framework will describe habitat in terms of density, productivity and use and indicates whether there is an absence of data and also build in other information sources. Using GIS, the information can be layered, allowing scientists and resource managers to understand what is known and what is not known. The Habitat Framework will use NOAA's Coastal Marine Ecological Classification System (CMECS) developed by the Federal Geographic Data Committee.

The potential benefits to the Olympic Coast are significant and align well with several OCNMS strategic priorities listed in the sanctuary's Management Plan related to action plans on habitat mapping and classification; populations, communities and ecosystems; and habitat protection. We support OCNMS involvement in developing the Habitat Framework, including the use of sanctuary data as one source to inform the product. This support comes with the understanding that the Habitat Framework products will be shared with partners and the public.

Based on these factors, OCNMS Advisory Council urges ONMS and NOAA to recognize the importance of such collaborative work, and to provide support, when possible.